



ANIMAL DEVAR TORAH: ANIMAL INTELLIGENCE

JUDAISM TEACHES THAT GOD IS CONCERNED WITH EACH AND EVERY HUMAN BEING.

- Do you have any idea why the rabbis teach us that this is true?
- It is because we are created in the image of God.
- What do *you* think it means to be created in the image of God?
- It might mean not only that we have a soul, because we have learned that animals also have a soul.
- What are some things that are impossible for animals to do but that human beings can do?
- We have a much greater intelligence, which allows us to learn and know right from wrong.
- Because of that intelligence we can study Torah and come to understand what God wants for the world.
- So the Rabbis teach that we are created in the image of God.

BUT THE RABBIS ALSO TEACH THAT GOD IS NOT CONCERNED INDIVIDUALLY WITH EACH AND EVERY ANIMAL, BUT ONLY WITH WHOLE GROUPS OF ANIMALS.

- What's important is that they survive and thrive as species.
- Do you feel the same way about killing a fly or a cockroach that you do about killing a fish or a mouse?
- What do you think about killing animals, possibly causing them pain, so we can come up with ways to prevent human pain and sickness?

SO WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT JEWISH THINGS WE HAVE LEARNED ABOUT HOW TO TREAT ANIMALS

- Jewish law forbids the mistreatment of living creatures.
- What do you think mistreatment means?
- Jewish law does not forbid killing animals.
- We are permitted to cause an animal pain and even take its life if it serves human life
- What might be some of the reasons (e.g., to provide food, help us to learn, or be useful in medical research) that we would be allowed to cause an animal pain or take its life?

THAT REMINDS ME OF A STORY

- Once, long ago, when animals could talk to one another, a pig saw a sparrow perched on a branch in a tree.
- The pig called up to the sparrow and said, “Sparrow, come down here. Don’t be afraid. The Messiah has come: we will all live in peace and no one will eat another.
- Just then there was the sound of furious barking.
- “What’s that?” asked the pig in a frightened voice. “You’re high up in the tree. What do you see?”
- “I see a pack of ferocious, starving dogs running this way.”
- The pig instantly took off, squealing in terror.
- “Why are you running away?” cried the sparrow. “You just said the Messiah has come—no one creature will now eat another.”
- “Dogs don’t believe in the Messiah!” shouted the pig as he disappeared from sight into the underbrush.
- “Neither do pigs!” called the sparrow after him.
- What do think we can learn from this story?



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